



NEWS RELEASE

For Release: August 25, 2015

Contact: City of Columbus, 812-376-2520

Columbus Municipal Airport Vies for Statewide Honor

The Columbus Municipal Airport is being considered for the Aviation Association of Indiana's "2015 Airport of the Year" honor in the State.

Airport Director, Brian Payne and his staff have invested over 100 hours preparing the extensive application. The competition includes a thorough evaluation of the airport's economic impact, aviation education, environmental improvements, corporate citizenship, aesthetics, safety & security and outreach into the community.

The airport has assisted in adding 112 student housing beds for five higher educational institutions on the Airpark. The units are also used to house interns for local corporations when classes end for the summer. In addition to adding a self-fuel farm for aircraft, companies like RSVP Veneer, Top Flight Aviation, Jeff Air Pilot Services, Canteen Vending, Outdoor Services, SIHO Insurance and Frasier Chiropractic and Sports Clinic now call the airport home, raising the number of businesses in the Airpark to sixty-two. The National Civil Air Patrol also conducts annual training there each July.

Government agencies like the Indiana Army National Guard, Family and Social Services Administration, Social Security Administration and Columbus Animal Care Services maintain offices on the property. Public safety entities like the Columbus Police and Fire, Indiana Excise Police, Greenwood Police, Indiana State Police, Speedway Police, Shelbyville Police, Johnson County Sheriff's Department, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Indiana Army National Guard conduct training there as well.

Recently, the airport received the National Balchen/Post award for excellence in snow and ice control, The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)

award for Digicast Excellence in Airport Training and an emergency response training regional honor from the Great Lakes Chapter of AAAE.

Civic outreach efforts include a community garden, Aviation Day that draws more than 5,000 people annually, a college-level aviation program conducted by Ivy Tech, the Columbus EAA Chapter 729 of the Young Eagles and the recently expanded Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum. The airport also draws over 80,000 residents and pilots annually to the newly remodeled terminal and the Hanger 5 Restaurant.

Agriculture is also a big part of airport operations. The airport farms 1,700 acres and produces Pioneer seed corn, dry corn, soybeans, wheat, watermelon, cantaloupe and tomatoes specifically for Elwood-based Red Gold Company.

Environmentally, the airport maintains a comprehensive recycling program, programmable thermostats, energy efficient lighting and pilot-activated runway lights to eliminate constant operation in hours of darkness. The carbon footprint has been further reduced by replacing a fleet of super-duty work vehicles with smaller, more versatile multi-use implements.

“Assembling the application alone has brought a great deal of pride to our staff on the accomplishments made here in the past 3 years so earning the award will be icing on the cake at this point.” Airport Director Brian Payne says. One airport in Indiana receives the honor each year. The 2015 recipient will be announced at the Aviation Association of Indiana’s annual conference in mid-October.



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